

Metropolitan Commission of Sewers.

A PRELIMINARY REPORT ON THE "POTTERIES,"

KENSINGTON,

BY

THOMAS LOVICK, ASSISTANT SURVEYOR.

In pursuance of the Order of the Works' Committee of 21st February, 1849, I have inspected that portion of Kensington called the Potteries, and beg to submit the following Report upon its general condition.

On the north, east, and west sides this locality is skirted by open ditches, some of them of the most foul and pestilential character, filled with the accumulations from the extensive piggeries attached to most of the houses. Intersecting in various parts, and discharging into the ditches on the north and west, are many smaller but still more offensive open ditches, some skirting houses, the bedroom windows of which open over them; some running in the rear and fronts of houses, others at the sides and through the middle of the streets and alleys, loading the atmosphere throughout their course with their pestilential exhalations.

The streets are unpaved and full of ruts, the surface is strewn with refuse of almost every conceivable description; they are at times wholly impassable. At *all* seasons they are in a most offensive and disgusting condition, emitting effluvia of the most nauseous character.

The majority of the houses are of a most wretched class, many being mere hovels in a ruinous condition, and are generally densely populated; they are filthy in the extreme, and contain vast accumulations of garbage and offal, the small gardens attached to some being purposely raised by this to a greater height.

Some are surrounded by banks formed of these accumulations. In the yards of some there are wells the water in which is so contaminated by the percolation of

the foul drainage as to be wholly unfit for domestic use, the inhabitants being compelled to fetch water from a pump at some distance, belonging to Mr Bird, paying a yearly rent for the privilege.

Adding to the general filth is the staple trade of the locality—the feeding and slaughtering of swine—of these I was informed by the local authorities there are now upwards of 3,000 in the place. The unhealthiness of this neighbourhood must be extreme, as is indicated by the tables of sickness and mortality in the Appendix, and as is illustrated by the fact that in one house in Sydney Place, adjoining a foul and noxious ditch, the whole of the inmates, *seven* in number, are now seriously ill of typhus fever.

The low sanitary condition of this district was specially mentioned by Dr Southwood Smith in his Report to the Poor Law Commissioners, presented to the House of Commons in June 1838, since which period there does not appear to have been any diminution of the then prevailing evils.

That which has been described to me as “the monster nuisance of the district” is a large stagnant piece of water called “the Ocean,” occupying an area of between 50 and 60,000 square feet, or upwards of *one-fourth* the area of the Potteries, if that is correctly stated at four acres. It appears to have been formed originally from excavations for brick-earth, and is several feet below the general level.

Several houses are situated on its banks, and discharge the whole of their refuse and drainage into it; it is also the receptacle for the refuse of other portions of this locality, and is stated to have been used for this purpose for the last twenty years. Abutting on the worst part of this piece of water, where there is a greater concentration of the foul drainage, the St James’s National Schools have been erected; these are attended daily by about 150 scholars. Their vicinity to this enormous cesspool, I was informed, has on several occasions injuriously affected the health of the scholars.

The windows on the side facing this water are now firmly closed against the ingress of the unwholesome emanations from this quarter, thus impeding free ventilation, and proportionably vitiating the internal atmosphere.

Surrounding this locality are excavations much below the general level, formed by the abstraction of the earth for the manufacture of bricks : many of these have been abandoned, and are now filled with foul and foetid water.

A brick-field, now in use, belonging to Mr Bird, a large owner of property in this district, contains several pools of water, and is low and has a damp appearance.

From a digest of Paving Boards in London and its vicinity, compiled in , it appears that the area of the whole of Kensington comprises 2,680 acres, and that the population is 26,834, or ten per acre.

The area of the Pottery district is stated to be *four* acres, with a population of 1,056, or 264 per acre; being a proportion twenty-six times greater than the proportion in the whole of Kensington. I have been favoured by Mr Frost, one of the medical officers of Kensington parish, with some statistics of the sickness and mortality in the districts under his charge. These clearly illustrate the effect of the low sanitary condition of the Pottery district upon the health of its inhabitants. From these I have deduced the principal results which are submitted in the Appendix.

In order to devise the best means for remedying the evils with which this locality is affected, a survey of the district is absolutely essential. For this I have given the necessary directions, and it will be carried on with the utmost despatch. I would beg to direct the attention of the Commissioners to the daily inconvenience experienced by the absence of a correct *detailed* survey, the already limited surveyor's staff being severely taxed by extra duties in supplying this omission. Great expense is continually incurred by the employment of additional force on labours of this description, great delays in the preparation of Reports of the utmost urgency are of continual occurrence, and the public health is seriously jeopardised.

THOMAS LOVICK.

12th March, 1849.

APPENDIX.

Statistics of Sickness and Mortality in the Notting Hill, Norland, and Pottery Districts of Kensington Parish.

TABLE, No. 1,
Of SICKNESS and MORTALITY in KENSINGTON PARISH.

Districts.	In the years					
	1846.		1847.		1848.	
	Sickness.	Mortality.	Sickness.	Mortality.	Sickness.	Mortality.
Notting Hill, Norland, Pottery .	360	Not stated	550	Not stated	602	Not stated
Pottery, proportion of . .	67	27	133	15	180	36
Proportion in the Potteries to the other districts.	$\frac{1}{5}$		$\frac{1}{4}$		$\frac{1}{3}$	

TABLE, No. 2,
Of SICKNESS and MORTALITY in KENSINGTON PARISH, in the Month of JANUARY.

Districts.	In the years					
	1847.		1848.		1849.	
	Sickness.	Mortality.	Sickness.	Mortality.	Sickness.	Mortality.
Notting Hill, Norland, Pottery -	55	Not stated	74	Not stated	64	Not stated
Proportion in the Potteries to the other districts -	14	—	22	—	31	—
	$\frac{1}{4}$	—	$\frac{1}{3}$	—	$\frac{1}{2}$	—

Taking particular classes of disease, the proportion of each class due to the Potteries can be shown.

Of influenza, 87 cases occurred in November and December 1847 in the three districts ; one-third of these cases was in the Potteries.

Of small-pox, 42 cases occurred in January, February, March, and April, 1848, in the three districts ; two-thirds of these cases were in the Potteries.

Of these cases the mortality was,—In the Potteries, 2, or 1 in 13.
In the other districts, 1, or 1 in 16.

Of diarrhoea and dysentery, 76 cases occurred in all the districts in 1848 ; of these, 28, or upwards of one-third, occurred in the Potteries.

Of fever observed between 14th November, 1848, and 14th February, 1849, the proportions were—

TABLE No. 3.

Districts.	To 1st January.		To 14th February.		Total.	
	Sickness.	Mortality.	Sickness.	Mortality.	Sickness.	Mortality.
Notting Hill and Norland . . .	11	0	5	0	16	0
Pottery . . .	15	In total	17	In total	32	3

Of the mortality in the years 1846-47-48, and to February 14th, 1849, there occurred—

In the Potteries - - - 86 deaths
In the Notting Hill and Norland districts 79 „

The proportions of ages at death are shown in the annexed table.

TABLE No. 4.

Districts.	Proportion of Deaths at the Ages						Greatest age at death.
	0 to 15.	Per Cent.	15 to 60.	Per Cent.	60 & up-wards.	Per Cent.	
Pottery . . .	69	80	12	14	5	6	77
Notting Hill and Norland . . .	34	43	26	33	19	24	80
EXCESS.							
In Potteries .	35	37	—	—	—	—	—
In Norland and Notting Hill .	—	—	14	19	14	18	—

The population is stated to be—

In the Notting Hill district	-	-	3,230
„ Norland „	-	-	821
„ Pottery „	-	-	1,056
			—
Total	-	-	5,107

The Pottery district bearing a proportion to the other districts of about *one-fifth*.

The area of the Potteries is stated at four acres.

Taking the sickness as exhibited in Table No. 1, it will be seen that whilst there has been in all the districts an absolute progressive increase of sickness in each year from 1846, the *proportion* has increased in the Potteries from one-fifth in 1846 to one-third in 1848.

Taking the sickness in the month of January (see Table No. 2), the *proportion* in the Potteries has increased from one-fourth in 1847 to one-half, or double, in 1849; the proportion of the population in the Potteries forming *one-fifth* of the total population in the *three* districts.

Taking particular classes of disease, occurring in all the districts, it appears that the proportion in the Potteries is—

Of influenza	-	-	-	38 per cent.	
Of small-pox	-	-	-	62	„ with a mortality of double the mortality in the other districts.
Of diarrhoea and dysentery	37	„			
Of fever	-	-	-	66	, with a mortality of one in 11 to a mortality of 0 in the other districts.

The infantile mortality in the Potteries, or mortality under fifteen years of age, is 80 per cent. of the total mortality, correspondent to the infantile mortality in the other districts of 43 per cent.

The adult mortality (from fifteen years upwards) in the Potteries is 20 per cent. of the total mortality, correspondent to the adult mortality in the other districts of 57 per cent.

The infant mortality in London in 1848 is stated as 50 per cent. of the total mortality; the correspondent mortality in the Potteries is 80 per cent., or 30 per cent. in excess of the mortality in London.

The proportion of sickness in each district to its population is as follows:—

TABLE No. 5.

Districts.	In the years		Average.	
	1847.	1848.		
	Per Cent.	Per Cent.	Per Cent.	
Pottery	12·6	17·0	14·8	
Notting Hill and Norland	10·2	10·4	10·3	

Showing an excess of sickness in the Potteries, as compared with the sickness in the other districts, of upwards of 4 per cent.

As the mortality is not stated in the Notting Hill and Norland districts, a comparison cannot be entered into. The proportion of deaths in the Potteries to its population can, however, be shown. These in the year 1848 amounted to 3·4 per cent., or 1 in 29·3, or 35 in 1,000 nearly, with a correspondent sickness of 17 per cent., or 1 in 6, or 166 in 1,000.

The average rate of mortality in the whole of London during the same period, as stated in the Registrar-General's tables, was 2·66 per cent.

THOS. LOVICK.

March 12th, 1849.

Metropolitan Sewers.

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BY

MR THOMAS LOVICK

ASSISTANT SURVEYOR,

ON THE

“POTTERIES,” KENSINGTON

*In pursuance of the Order of the Works' Committee
of 21st February, 1849.*

MARCH 12TH, 1849
